

1 TITLE OF THE INVENTION

2 DEFORMABLE DRAWING TABLET

3 FIELD OF THE INVENTION

4 The invention relates to a drawing tablet having a deformable drawing
5 surface on which a user can draw an image and subsequently progressively
6 deform the drawing surface to progressively distort the image providing a
7 change of expression or other amusing effect, or deform an edge portion of
8 the drawing surface/tablet to form a profile of a selected character.

9 BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

10 There have been numerous puzzles of the moving block type in which
11 images on the blocks are changed by changing the relative positions of
12 individual blocks. However, the blocks are not intended and do not in
13 combination provide a drawing surface, while edges of the blocks are
14 confined in a rigid framework of constant profile. The entire underlying
15 purpose is to make image changes difficult requiring the user and to move the
16 blocks along a tortuous, maze- like path which is intentionally made difficult to
17 predict. None permit the user to readily and incrementally or progressively
18 distort an image carried by the blocks.

19 SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

20 It is an object of the invention to provide a surface on which a user can
21 readily draw an image and readily change or distort the image in a
22 progressive fashion with a degree of predictability.

23 Another object of the invention is to provide a drawing surface having
24 an edge portion which a user can form into a profile of a chosen character,
25 optionally, with the aid of a die or stencil of complementary profile applied to
26 such edge portion or by using his fingers and subsequently draw an image
27 related to the profile.

28 A further object of the invention is to provide an preprinted image
29 carrying surface which can be deformed to distort or change the preprinted

1 image.

2 Accordingly the invention provides a deformable drawing tablet
3 comprising a series of individual elongate strips; means confining the strips
4 together for limited relative longitudinal movement over each other in parallel,
5 coplanar relation, so that respective adjacent longitudinal edge portions of the
6 strips are exposed and combine to form a drawing surface of the tablet and
7 so that a user can shift individual strips longitudinally to deform the drawing
8 tablet and thereby distort an image carried by the drawing surface.

9 Preferably, the strips move by sliding over each other.

10 It is further preferred that a lateral edge of the tablet is formed by
11 respective longitudinal ends of the strips so that the lateral edge can be
12 formed into profiles of different characters by shifting the strips longitudinally
13 to different relative positions

14 According to another aspect, the invention provides an amusement
15 device comprising a series of elongate strips, means confining the strips
16 stacked one on top of the other in parallel, coplanar relation with exposed
17 adjacent longitudinal edge portions of the strips together forming an image
18 carrying surface and adjacent longitudinal end portions of the strips being
19 exposed to form a transverse side edge of the image carrying surface,
20 individual strips being movable longitudinally over each other to one of deform
21 an image on the image carrying surface drawing surface and form the
22 transverse side edge into a profile of a character.

23 The amusement device may be incorporated into a key ring fob.

24 BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

25 In order that the invention may be readily understood, embodiments of
26 a deformable drawing tablet according to the invention will now be described
27 by way of example only with reference to the accompanying drawings in
28 which:

29 Figure 1 is a front perspective view of a first embodiment of drawing
30 tablet in an undeformed state;

31 Figure 2 is an exploded perspective view of the first embodiment with

1 adjacent groups of slats slid to the maximum extent in opposite relative
2 directions;

3 Figure 3 is a perspective view of the top of a stack of slats held
4 together by clamping members;

5 Figure 4 is a schematic view of the drawing tablet with an edge formed
6 into a profile of a character's face and associated facial features being drawn
7 thereon;

8 Figure 5 is a schematic elevational view illustrating the use of a stencil
9 to deform a drawing tablet;

10 Figure 6 is a schematic perspective view showing progressive
11 deformation a tablet with a preprinted image thereon

12 DESCRIPTION OF PARTICULAR EMBODIMENT

13 As shown in fig 1-3, the deformable drawing tablet 1 comprises a stack
14 2 of individual strips 3 confined together in parallel relation between a cap
15 member 4 and a base member 5, and for limited relative longitudinal sliding
16 movement of the individual strips 3, one on top of the other, so that a face of
17 the stack 2 forms a deformable drawing surface 3.

18 As shown in fig 3, each strip 3 comprises a slat 4 with flat, upper and
19 lower major faces 5 joined, perpendicularly, at a front and rear by elongate,
20 flat side edge portions 6. The slats are formed with central, longitudinally
21 extending locating slots 7.

22 The slats 4 are confined together by a rectangular section post 9 which
23 extends transversely through said slots 7 in longitudinally sliding relation
24 therewith and has respective opposite, upper and lower ends bonded in slots
25 10 in respective upper and lower clamping plates 12 and 12', which clamp
26 the slats 4 between them so that the flat side edge portions 6 are contiguous
27 combining to form opposite, front and rear substantially flat drawing surfaces
28 3. The clamping plates each have a tool locating notch 13 extending inwards
29 from a longitudinal end for locating a straight edge to aid in straightening the
30 lateral edge of the stack.

31 In an alternative embodiment, the clamping plates are formed with

1 sleeve portions around each slot for aiding retention of the post 9 therein.

2 In a further alternative embodiment, the clamping plates are omitted
3 and the post is received directly as a force fit, supplemented by adhesive, in
4 the socket in the cap member.

5 The cap member 4 is integrally molded with a peripheral flange 42
6 providing a downwardly opening recess 43 traversed by strengthening ribs
7 44 which define a seat for the upper clamping plate 11 and within which is a
8 central socket 45 receiving the upwardly protruding socket 11 of the clamping
9 plate as a press fit securing the cap member to the clamping plate. The cap
10 member 4 has a straight, elongate apron 46 depending from a front as an aid
11 to securement, preventing twisting of the stack relative to the cap member
12 and to at least partly conceal the upper clamping plate from the front. The cap
13 member 4 is further molded with an upwardly extending pocket 47 having a
14 rim 48 on which an elongate eraser housing shell 21 is removably mounted
15 as a press fit, storing an eraser 22 of plastic foam 23 suitable for removing
16 penned erasable spirit ink drawings from the tablet surface. The cap member
17 has the profile of a hat, with the flange 42 constituting a brim and the pocket
18 48, together with the eraser housing 21 seated thereon, constituting a crown.

19 The base member 5 comprises a molded pyramidal shell structure 50
20 providing a downwardly divergent storage compartment 51 for pen 52 having
21 a pen admitting opening 53 at one end, closed at a bottom by a foot plate 54
22 adjacent the opening 53 leaving a pen access opening 55 remote from the
23 opening 53. A slot 56 is formed below the footplate for storing a simple blade
24 form implement 57 of the same thickness as a slat so that it can be applied,
25 end to end of an individual slat to slide it relative to adjacent slats. The face of
26 the implement may also be applied to the edge of the table as a straightening
27 aid. The base member is also formed with an upwardly opening recess 55
28 and a central socket 56 for receiving the lower end of the post 9 as a press fit,
29 supplemented by adhesive, mounting the stack on the base member.

30 The base member may be considered to have a profile of a collar
31 which together with the hat- form cap member adds a contextural effect to an
32 image of a face drawn on the tablet.

1 In one mode of operation, the user withdraws the pen from the base
2 and sketches a simple picture of, for example, a face on the drawing surface
3 of the tablet and then amuses himself by shifting individual slats longitudinally
4 to incrementally and progressively distort the drawn image in a controlled
5 manner. The user need not be an artist as even a very simple and crude line
6 sketch, even an oval depicting an eye and a single line depicting a mouth are
7 sufficient to afford considerable amusement to children, when distorted. The
8 controlled and progressive incremental manner of the distortion of the drawn
9 image may also serve as a teaching or training aid teaching the user the
10 position of the lines to form human features and change human expression
11 etc.

12 As shown in fig 5, at least one die or stencil 61 of predetermined profile
13 may be provided for application against the lateral edge of the tablet 1' to shift
14 the individual slats longitudinally by predetermined different amounts to form
15 a profile of a character, adding to the amusement effect. Alternatively, the
16 user may simply form the profile using his fingers. The user may then draw
17 associated facial or body features on the drawing surface to complete
18 illustration of the character, as also shown in fig. 4. The die or stencil may be
19 provided with stenciling cut outs 62 in the shape of facial features such as
20 ears, moustaches, mouths etc with the aid of which the features may be
21 drawn directly onto the tablet.

22 As shown in Fig 6, one surface 3' of the drawing tablet 1" may be
23 reserved for drawing on by the user while the opposite surface 3" may carry a
24 preprinted image (Mr potato head) in which case the user may shift the
25 individual slats longitudinally to distort the preprinted image or provide a
26 profile complementary to the preprinted image. The image may be any type of
27 indicia including, for example, color blocks, lettering etc

28 Moving the slats with the fingers also provides an amusing tactile effect
29 in combination with the amusing visual effect of progressive image distortion.

30 As the individual slats are retained clamped together as a stack after
31 removal of the cap and base, the edge of the stack can be readily applied
32 against a persons face to obtain a profile thereof.

1 All the components of the drawing tablet are molded from plastic
2 material.

3 In one version, the slats comprise a luminescent plastic material so
4 that the image drawn on the drawing surface by a suitable light pen provides
5 a transient residual glow, which glow lasts only for a few minutes, thereby
6 obviating any need for image erasure.